

Is Debate Useful?

The Armers and the Disarmers

The most immediately vexing problem facing the advocates of disarmament is that of tactics: to whom should they speak? in what terms? under what circumstances? The problem arises at many levels of the peace movement; in our Feb. 2 issue, Roger Hagan discussed it in terms of the tactics pursued by the "peace candidates" in last November's elections. Here two thoughtful observers discuss it in quite another context: a unique symposium, held at the University of Michigan, which brought together what one of our contributors calls "the armers and the disarmers" and the other describes as "those concerned with avoiding war, the others with waging peace."

Both our contributors would class themselves among the "disarmers"; they are also good friends as well as faculty colleagues. But they view the symposium with quite different eyes and their arguments are here presented in "pro" and "con" form.—EDITORS.

Pro

J. David Singer

During the week before Christmas, a novel and ambitious conference occurred on the University of Michigan campus. Co-sponsored by the Bendix Systems Division, a major supplier of weapons systems and surveillance equipment, and a university which has probably been the nation's most active center for peace research, the International Symposium on Arms Control attracted nearly 400 individuals from government, industry, academe and public-affairs organizations.

Clearly, each of us who organized the conference (whose details will be found in a forthcoming issue of the *Journal of Arms Control*) had a different combination and hierarchy of objectives in mind. Let me mention those which seemed most germane:

(1) add to knowledge of the general problem area;

(2) help professionalize and legitimize the peace-research enterprise;

(3) improve mutual understanding among the diverse groups;

(4) build support for the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

There were many others, latent

and manifest, altruistic and selfish, serious and trivial, but of those mentioned, I should like to focus on one in particular: improving the relationship and understanding between the "armers" and the "disarmers," who more often than not are also the insiders and the outsiders respectively. The question is: how legitimate and valuable is this goal, and to what extent was it realized?

The second part of the question can only be answered by assertion, since space precludes a detailed summary of the conference setting, topics and participants. So let me respond with a relatively unequivocal "considerable." But assuming that a wholesome and frank dialogue did take place, the first part of the question nevertheless remains: is such intercourse useful to the responsible peace movement? In the section which follows, my colleague, Anatol Rapoport, suggests that it is not, because the moment the peace dove lies down (or even sits down) with the war hawk, his goose is (if I may use the metaphor) cooked. The hawk, he says, speaks and understands only the language of strategy, and once the dove has adopted this language, he must adopt the concomitant mode of thought. This mode, because it assumes that threat and punishment represent the only effective means of dealing with an adversary, enhances the self-fulfilling prophecy. By resorting to threats of violence, we provide the evidence which persuades the adversary—who also views himself as the de-

terror—that we can only be restrained by the threat of destruction.

The argument is compelling, but it seems to give insufficient weight to several crucial considerations. First of all, none of us can be very self-assured when explaining or predicting Soviet behavior; I would even argue that the men in the Kremlin are themselves uncertain as to their own objectives and strategy in the middle-run. The dangers of both dogmatic optimism and dogmatic pessimism could be profound; and it therefore behooves the nation to develop a policy of what might be called sophisticated uncertainty. Such a policy merely assumes that the Soviets, like other major powers of this and other eras, are opportunistic, and are likely to grasp at cheap victories but shy away from gambles when the probability and cost of failure get "too high." Our problem, then, would seem to be one of persuading them that cheap victories will be few and far between, and at the same time offering the sorts of inducements which encourage competitive, nonmilitary coexistence. Consequently, unless one is willing to run the risks implicit in assuming that the adversary has no expansionist tendencies, there is little choice but to retain a military establishment and the panoply of people which must direct it. And to eschew contact with these people (or their nongovernmental counterparts) is to deny oneself: (a) some fascinating intellectual experiences, (b) access to views and information not often found in published documents, and (c) the opportunity for reciprocal influence.

Item (c) leads, in turn, to another compelling reason for encouraging contact between the insiders and the outsiders, and between the armers and disarmers. (The two pairs need not necessarily coincide, though they most often do.) There is almost no serious dialogue—in government or out—between those responsible for, or committed to, preparedness and those responsible for (very few in government), or committed to, arms reduction. The result is often a

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stand-off between the moderates and the ardent peace-mongers, while the more aggressive characters move into the resulting vacuum. Or, to look at it another way, if the responsible and concerned policy-maker finds that the concerned outsider is ill-informed, indifferent to the exigencies of the internal-policy struggle, or naive about past Soviet behavior, he will be increasingly drawn toward the more belligerent end of the arms-policy continuum.

Finally, there is a very simple and direct way in which the knowledgeable and concerned disarmers can influence the policy process, however modestly. No matter how great his experience and his ability, the full-time policy-maker just never seems to find time to do all the reading and thinking he would like; consequently, he tends to rely on his professionally competent friends who have the time to "follow" related events, the literature and the general gossip of the trade. Sometimes, the academic even discovers that his own models, ideas or phrases have found their way into the policy dialogue, via either informal conversation or a published article or unpublished memo which the appropriately receptive policy-maker encountered or requested.

Almost all the pressures at work on the man in the Departments of State or Defense, the Atomic Energy Commission or the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency are in the direction of the perceived internal consensus: more means-oriented, more shortsighted and, above all, more politically respectable. The former professor who, before he entered government service, believed in a combination of minimum deterrence and modest multilateral arms reduction, and who now not only verbalizes but *believes* the slippery rhetoric of preponderance, counterforce and civil defense, is responding not so much to new and hitherto unavailable information, or even to new events, as to the need to conform in order to survive and remain "effective" in government.

Those of us who are free from those constraints, who have the time and the environment for independent thought and research, and who need adhere to no particular party line of the moment—it is up to us to speak out, publicly

and privately. But we cannot speak out intelligently if we don't know what's going on behind the headlines, and we will not be heard if we don't appreciate the dilemma of the decision-maker. This cannot be done if we cut ourselves off from those with whom we are not in total agreement.

If, then, the main purpose of the University of Michigan conference was to bring together the armers and disarmers, the insiders and outsiders, for serious debate, quiet conversation and an exchange of information and ideas, this was accomplished in large measure; it may represent an important step toward hastening the development of (a) an informal alliance between the responsible man in government and the knowledgeable outsider in industry or academe and (b) an effective dialogue between the armers and the disarmers. Thus, even though I, for one, heard a lot of strategic views with which I profoundly disagree, the chances are that we invigorated the intellectual and personal base upon which men of courage and competence may yet come together in developing a military policy whose coherence and intelligence befits the most powerful and liberal nation of our time.

Con

Anatol Rapoport

I will take issue with only two points in my colleague's evaluation of the International Symposium on Arms Control. The first concerns the question of whether the symposium did indeed provide new opportunities for "serious debate, quiet conversation and an exchange of information and ideas," and, if so, about what and for whom.

As I listened to some of the papers, I kept imagining myself at a conference discussing the problem of installing seat belts on the jalopies in which our spirited youngsters play Chicken. I thought I was listening to experts giving papers on the strengths of materials from which belts are made, on the relative merits of the various belt types,

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methods of installation, etc. Statisticians were presenting computations of safety coefficients with due concern for the influence of road and weather conditions—all very thorough, responsible and scientific. Then I thought I heard the teenagers stating *their* problems. Some argued that the seat belts would be a handicap, because the whole point of the game is to convince the other driver that *he* is to give way if he wants to live, and this argument is the more persuasive the more the other is convinced that you don't give a damn, which would be belied by the seat belt. To this I thought I heard replies by the proponents of the seat belts that, on the contrary, the added safety measure would allow the player who has it to show more determination. The others argued back that what about the other, would he not also be more determined if he, too, had a seat belt?

All these arguments were backed by profound expertise in physics, engineering, strategic analysis and the theory of games. All the questions raised were highly interesting and eminently researchable. The aim of the conference was admirable—to make a dangerous game less dangerous, and its outlook was realistic, assuming there is no way to stop the kids from playing the game. Still, if one kept one's sense of proportion, one could hardly avoid the feeling that one was witnessing a farce.

I have just referred to the imaginary seat-belt conference, not the one under discussion. I am not prepared to dismiss the arms-control symposium as a farce. For one thing, by no means all of the sessions gave the impression of irrelevance and futility. There were significant glimpses of sanity and occasionally of a positive contribution to what I had naively imagined to be the aim of symposium—an exchange of ideas in preparation for a major research effort on the pressing problem of reversing the arms race. Let us, however, see whether as a result of the symposium one can expect any movement in this direction.

There were two groups of participants: one concerned with avoiding war, the other with waging peace.

The first, by far the larger group, was concerned with ways of



Genuine old master? Or a fake?

tinkering with the war machine in order to keep it from exploding and at the same time to keep it serviced and ready to go. It was apparent that this group viewed war as something that *occurs*, like an earthquake or a tornado, and that the war machine can and should be designed to prevent the occurrence of this disaster with proper safety devices to guard its possessor against accidents. The other, much smaller, group took its point of departure from the assumption that wars do not "occur," but are made by men who control war machines. To those who held this view the war machine was not an insurance against a quasi-natural disaster, but an instrument of man-made disaster. Actually, these people were concerned with a wide variety of problems, but what was most conspicuous to the first group was the second group's nagging insistence that the war machine will have to be dismantled, not "made safe" while fully operative.

Now the problem of keeping a war machine both operative and "safe" requires a great deal of competence relevant to the operation of the machine. And this is about the only competence which the arms-control people take seriously. The problems with which the disarmament group was concerned also required a great deal of competence, but not of the kind that is relevant to the operation of the war machine. These problems were all but ignored by the arms-control people.

Therefore the position of the disarmament people appeared to the arms-control people to be without "professional" foundation. Those who spoke the language of physics, logistics, power politics and military strategy thought of themselves as professionals and tended to regard the others as amateurs. This atmosphere was not conducive to any serious exchange of views.

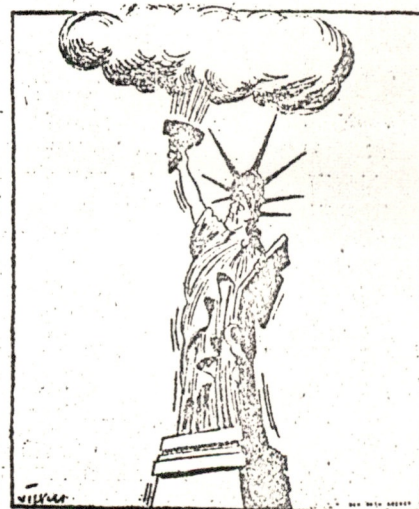
This brings me to the second point with which I want to take issue. Dr. Singer places his hopes on the "professionalization" of the peace worker. But it is frequently the very expertise of the "professional" that prevents him from looking at his axiomatic base and at its underlying value system. (Logical rigor demands that one examine the logical structure of an argument, but not the underlying postulates.) The hero of the novel *The Bridge on the River Kwai* was in the same position. His bridge was a thing of beauty and a monument to human ingenuity and perseverance. He lost his life defending his creation. But he was insane, and his bridge, for all the work and passion that went into its making, was only a materialization in wood and iron of a madman's ravings. When I think of these examples, I tend to view "professionalization" with considerable suspicion.

Dr. Singer makes one telling point, and in our long and searching conversations, I have admitted its force. He says that our efforts are futile if we do not reach *someone* who can influence policy. Now those who are in positions of influence have got there because they have become immune to beatitudes, at least to *our* beatitudes. But some of them are still susceptible to arguments based on knowledge, says Dr. Singer. Moreover, the decision-makers and those who influence them, for all their toughness, are not monsters but people like us, he says—even the strategists.

So here are these people, who are not monsters, who are bright enough to follow a complex argument and are reasonably open-minded, even though hard-headed, in the sense that it takes a *serious* argument to make them change their ways, not just value judgments like "It is wrong to slaughter babies." Dr. Singer's main point is that to reach these people, we must

engage them in a serious dialogue in their own language.

Now I am a strong believer in serious dialogues. I consider a dialogue serious if each party enters it not only with an intention to modify the views of the other party, but with an awareness that his own views may be modified in the process. The trouble is that while I believe that many a well-meaning strategist will enter a serious dialogue with me in good faith—that is, allowing that his views may change in the process—I cannot say the same for myself. I would be entering such a dialogue under false pretenses. I can well imagine a serious dialogue with people with whose fundamental positions I profoundly disagree, for example, with a devout Catholic, an orthodox Communist, a laissez faire conservative. To talk with them in good faith is difficult, but not impossible. With each there is somewhere a common ground. Somewhere our conceptions of good and evil overlap. Each of them has a point which does bring out (although I think in an exaggerated or distorted manner) some real aspect of the human condition. With such a person I can engage in a serious dialogue. In doing so, I need not feel committed to an utter destruction of his world or his faith. Not so with the planner of "rational military strategy." To me the only possible motive for associating intellectually with him would be a nefarious one—to infiltrate his world in order to destroy it. He is to me not an opponent, but an enemy. If I were to learn his language, I would do so not in order to understand him, but in order to pass for a professional so as to get his attention. In short, in such a



dialogue I would find myself in the position of a spy or of a Jesuit of the seventeenth century, or of a Communist in the darkest days of the *Stalinshchina*.

Still, I will concede to Dr. Singer that one hope remains, namely, to seek out those among the non-monsters who also want to destroy the world of "rational military strategy," those who have themselves joined that world in the sincere belief that by infiltrating it they can conduct at least a holding operation. If the expected time of the holocaust can be stretched from two to five years by inducing the Joint Chiefs of Staff to switch from the presently ascendant counterforce strategy to the "minimal deterrence" strategy, then there is some point in learning the techniques of strategic argument. Such arguments can be compared to the legalistic conjuring required to get a reprieve of execution of an innocent defendant. A bag of tricks is sometimes needed to prevent an irreparable travesty of justice, but it is a mistake to identify this virtuosity with justice. Similarly, the arguments of the "moderates" in the strategic mode should not be viewed as contributions to peace,

but only as desperate emergency measures.

Perhaps there are genuine men of good will among the strategists, and perhaps joining forces with them offers some hope. If working with them requires learning the obscene language of nuclear strategy, so be it. Let those who have the stomach for it, learn it. In this I agree with Dr. Singer. I disagree, however, in viewing the acquisition of this knowledge as the "professionalization" of the peace worker. I maintain that the knowledge of the weaponer and of the strategist is useless to the peace-worker's profession, because the frame of reference in which the strategist's concepts are developed is one in which movement toward peace is impossible.

The strategist's paradigm of conflict is the game of strategy—the model of "rational" conflict. The most crucial characteristic of this model is the finality with which the constraints of the conflict, namely the "rules" of the game and the objectives of the players, are given. Flexibility, therefore, is possible only in the choice of strategy and of the sub-objectives to strive for in the pursuit of the final goals. The final goals or the meaning of the

game cannot be re-evaluated in this frame of reference.

As an example, I will cite one paper presented at the symposium. (In fairness, I should point out that I have picked the example to stress the point.) A mathematician analyzed a two-person game between Inspectors and Evaders. The rules of the game permitted the Inspectors to carry out a certain number of inspections (presumably in connection with some arms control or disarmament agreement between two nameless opponents). The objective of the Inspectors was to maximize the probability of detecting violations, while the objective of the Evaders was naturally to maximize the frequency of undetected violations. The solution of the problem was two recommended strategies, one for the Inspectors, one for the Evaders (certain methods of "randomizing" inspections and violations respectively), which guaranteed to both parties the closest approach to their respective goals possible under the rules of the game. With all respect to the ingeniousness of such formulations and to game theory as an intellectual achievement, I submit that knowledge derived from such in-

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The View from the Scaffold David Cort

The intention of the modern, democratic, industrialized society is to develop a world without risk. Since it is within the definition of science that it can produce absolutely predictable—that is, riskless—results, this dream is almost within our reach. In the delusion that it has already been reached, many sectors of our society in government, management and labor are to be found trying to succeed without really trying.

In this simply marvelous world, there are at least two catches, to be named perhaps Catch 20 and Catch 21, on Joseph Heller's scale of *Catch 22*.

Catch 20 is the goof-off, now standard practice in Western industrial civilization and also, I am told, under Communist industrial-

ization. This is a slang word which has some foundation in the dictionary, "goof" being a stupid or foolish person, but the "goof-off" is a skilled way of appearing to do the job without doing it at all. Since Catch 20 is well known to everybody, we can omit one hundred pages of documentation.

Catch 21 is that a world without risk is impossible and will always be impossible. Only useless people live without risk.

Obviously Catch 20 cannot be juxtaposed to Catch 21 without disastrous results, including violent death.

This is the situation we find in those trades which must send their workers far down or high up. For the first, there are the tunnel workers and the miners, especially those in coal which, being organic, ferments methane gas or fire damp. For the second, there are the steel

workers, airplane crews, astronauts and window-cleaners. In these occupations, the goof-off is nearly synonymous with murder, no matter how sanctified the role may have become in a theoretically riskless world.

The case of the window-cleaners is a classic example of men in peril defending themselves, through a union, against the goof-off in a thousand forms, some of which will be given, all of which could kill.

Not long ago, no window-cleaner could get insurance from any company. He was regarded as already as good as dead. He had no safety belt; it would have been useless, since there were no window-anchors to fasten the belt to. He fell, and was killed, with appalling frequency.

The window-cleaners themselves, as men who preferred to survive,

David Cort, a former Time-Life editor, is a frequent contributor.

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film?" he asked: "The Germans are the ones who should be asking to be excused." Loy gave the journalists present a bitter speech: "Some episodes of Nazi barbarism were omitted. . . . We tried to catch the spirit that animated those days. I want to reply to those German journalists who have dared to become ironic over the execution of the sailor and the shooting up of a boatload of Neapolitans. Let me tell you more . . . the things that are not in the film. At Nola, a group of Italian officers were shot and buried next to the latrines. . . . The Germans were thieves as well as murderers. Somebody has said that the German C.O., Colonel Scholl, was really not a bad fellow but that he was provoked by the partisans. But though the German law was that ten Italians should be shot for every German, Scholl made his own law: he shot 100 Italians for every German. This is history. Neither I nor Vasco Pratolini nor Carlo Bernari invented any of this. . . ." (These two well-known Italian writers collaborated with Loy in the film. Bernari is himself a Neapolitan.) The conference reached boiling point when a Fascist deputy, Caradonna, asked Loy why he didn't make a film of the Italians who died in Russia. Loy snapped: "I'll do that, and I'll start at the point where the Germans open fire on the Italian troops."

Not all the Italian Left approves entirely of the film. A Naples Communist leader told me that the film gave a completely false impression of the revolt. The revolt had not been unorganized, or on that scale. It had consisted of "highly organized, small, armed groups" with very specific tasks, chiefly aimed at preventing the German destruction of the city. Nor had the Germans been chased from the city; they had, in any case, decided on a withdrawal to the Cassino line.

Politics and history apart, what are the artistic merits of the film? It is already a commonplace to say that Loy has done for Naples what Rossellini's *Open City* did for Rome. But *Open City* had a deep sense of humanity that is somehow lost in Loy's film. It is odd that, in spite of the massacres, there is nothing fragile in *The Four Days*, as there was in *Open City*, also in *Paisan*. In those films the pathos was true; here, it is a little forced, even imitated from those first neo-realistic war films. Nor is it sufficient to justify the extravagance by saying that it is appropriate to the

Italian temperament. Untold artistic sins can be perpetrated—and are, in this film—in the name of the Neapolitan temperament. The artist dealing with hysteria need not be hysterical.

The Italo-German quarrel shows no signs of abating, in spite of Italian Foreign Minister Piccione's visit to Bonn to smooth things over. *Der Abend* writes that the Germans must teach the Italians a lesson. *Stern* called *The Four Days* an "insurrection of pimps and prostitutes." Meanwhile the Italian left-wing is urgently preparing a counter-documentation to combat the expected Wehrmacht statement on what took place at Naples. It will certainly be difficult for the Germans to deny the insurrection, because the Fascist newspapers of the time speak of "armed bands of Bolsheviks in the streets of Naples," while Radio Munich (October 2, 1943) announced that after "three days of bitter fighting, the resistance of the bandits had been broken by the Black-shirts."

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vestigations, is not of the sort that is relevant to the "professionalization" of the peace worker.

Instead of matching the strategist's calculations by counter-calculations and so giving to the whole approach an aura of totally undeserved respectability, the peace worker should rather manage to meet the strategist on his own (the peace worker's) ground. This is not simply in order to get the best of him in an argument (scoring points is futile in this context), but in order to keep the dialogue centered on the relevant issues. As I have said, there is little hope of inducing those who take strategy seriously to think like human beings. There may be hope, however, of getting the others, the infiltrators (if they have not forgotten their avowed purpose of joining the Establishment and its research affiliates) to become somewhat more sophisticated in areas of knowledge relevant to peace-making: psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science and history. Then, perhaps, one can get a larger proportion of sessions in future arm-control symposia (from which, hopefully, the word "disarmament" will no longer be dropped), where matters relevant to the substantive issues and the psychology of human conflict will be discussed.